

Opening Address

Kenji Iiyama: Good afternoon, distinguished guests and participants, ladies and gentlemen, it's my great honor and privilege to open the international symposium "Contribution of Japanese Agricultural Scientists towards the Millennium Development Goals."

First of all, on behalf of the organizers of this symposium, Japan Forum on International Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development, as well as Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Science, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our guests from the ministry, Mr. Katsuki Oda, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Hiroyuki Takeya, Director General of the Secretariat of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, for honoring us with their presence in spite of their hectic schedules.

I would also like to thank very much the four keynote speakers: Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, Chair of CGIAR Science Council, Dr. Taizo Yakushiji, Executive Member, the Council for Science and Technology Policy of the Cabinet Office of Japan, Mr. Jacques Van Outryve, International Federation of Agriculture Journalists, and Mr. Ariyuki Matsumoto, Vice President, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and session speakers for kindly accepting our invitation to deliver precious speeches.

Our cordial appreciation also goes to the director general and board members of CGIAR centers, in particular those who came from abroad, Dr. Papa Seck of WARDA and Dr. Masa Iwanaga of CIMMYT, for their participation.

This symposium is an event of the joint activities of J-FARD and JIRCAS. A series of symposiums has already been held since the establishment of J-FARD in 2004. As you may be aware, J-FARD is a cross-institutional forum of whoever is interested in agricultural research for development, including forestry and fisheries research in this country. JIRCAS strongly supports the forum as the mission of both institutions are very much common.

This year we decided to discuss the contribution of Japanese scientists toward the development. The theme is indeed very broad and general; however, we think it is an indispensable and timely issue in this period of time when Japanese research institutes and universities are aimed at opening their eyes toward global issues and the pressure of administrative reforms, and when the Japanese science and technology society is looking for the way of contributing to the harmonized development of the world.

Everyone gathered here today may agree with the idea that research collaboration among the relevant institutions and the capacity-building of human resources are the key concerns in this issue.

I am confident that the symposium will provide all those who are related to agricultural research for development in this country, as well as in other countries, with the appropriate recommendations and guidelines for the future activities.

There are a tremendous number of problems relating to the Millennium Development Goals and there must be many different ways of contributing to them even in the area of agricultural research. Through lively discussion during today and tomorrow, I hope that Japanese agricultural scientists can also confirm our common willingness toward the global environment.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the co-sponsors, JICA, CGIAR, and especially to the United Nations University which facilitated the use of this hall, as well as to many other organizations for providing kind support to the symposium. Thank you very much for your attention.